

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)**

### **Youth Leadership Program with South Asia Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan ECA/PE/C/ PY-11-30**

#### **Office of Citizen Exchanges Youth Programs Division**

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the Youth Leadership Program with South Asia and the Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan. Proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). An application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

This document not only provides guidance for the preparation of a proposal for these programs but also establishes guidelines for the implementation of the cooperative agreement.

#### **I. STATEMENT OF WORK**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of the U.S. Embassies in Kathmandu, Colombo, and Baku are supporting the participation of high school youth and adult educators from Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Azerbaijan and the United States in intensive three-week exchanges in the partner country. [Please note that the U.S. Embassy in Colombo oversees activities in both Sri Lanka and the Maldives.]

The exchange activities will introduce the participants to a comprehensive survey of civic rights and responsibilities, leadership, respect for diversity, and community activism. Activities will focus on building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas. The students and educators will participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders, and discussion groups and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and the peers of the host country.

The responsibilities of the award recipient for each program will be the following:

- 1) Recruitment and Selection
  - a) Conduct an open, merit-based competition for youth and adult exchange participants in the participating countries, in cooperation with the Public Affairs Section, with clearly identified criteria for the selection and a formal process.

- b) Conduct an open, merit-based competition for youth and adult exchange participants in the United States with clearly identified criteria for the selection and a formal process.
  - c) Develop plans for outreach and recruitment of both students and educators that will generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of their country.
  - d) Develop applications for students and adult educators in consultation with ECA and our overseas representatives.
  - e) Recommend the final participants and alternates. No invitations may be issued without the Department of State clearance (ECA and PAS).
- 2) Preparation
- a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests.
  - b) Facilitate the passport and J-1 visa application process for the foreign participants, working with ECA and PAS, and secure visas, if necessary, for the U.S. participants.
  - c) Conduct a pre-departure orientation for participants, including general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.
  - d) Make housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer homestays (including lodging and meals, as well as cross-cultural interaction) to the participants for a significant portion of the exchange period in both the United States and in the partner country or countries. Criminal background checks must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
  - e) Orient host institutions, staff, and families to the goals of the program and to the cultures and sensitivities of the visitors.
  - f) Make arrangements for interpreters, if necessary, when the U.S. participants are traveling abroad.
  - g) Make all round-trip international (complying with the Fly America Act) and domestic travel arrangements for the participants.
- 3) Exchange Activities
- a) Design, plan, and implement intensive and substantive three-week exchanges on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals. Activities will be school and community-based, as appropriate to the program. Recruit peers from the host country to be engaged in activities with the exchange participants.
  - b) Provide opportunities for the adult participants to work with their peers and other professionals, volunteers, and youth advocates with whom they can discuss the support of youth development.
  - c) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
  - d) Engage participants in at least two community service activities during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event and helps participants see how to apply the experience at home.
  - e) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' well-being, preventing and dealing with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise in a timely manner. Inform ECA and PAS about any significant health or safety issues affecting program participants.

- f) Provide a closing session to summarize the delegation's activities, prepare participants for their return home, and to plan for the future.
- 4) Follow-on Activities
  - a) Conduct follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce values and skills imparted during the exchange program and help them apply what they have learned to serve their schools and communities.
  - b) Support alumni in making presentations or preparing articles to share their experiences once they return home.
  - c) Applicants should present creative and effective ways to address the program themes, for both program participants and their peers, as a means to amplify the program impact.
  - d) [Optional] Arrange international travel by program staff, trainers, or educators to provide further training for alumni and their peers like that conducted during the exchange.
- 5) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program (See section IV.3d.3 of the RFGP).
- 6) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 7) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including management of sub-award relationships with partner organizations.

The responsibilities of the Department of State will be the following:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 2) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 3) Approve the final candidate selection and alternates.
- 4) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 5) Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 6) Representation of the U.S. Government as the program sponsor at exchange events.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.

## **II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

**Partner Organizations:** An applicant must have the organizational capacity in the partner country or countries to implement the overseas activities, recruit and select participants for the program, provide follow-on activities, and organize a content-rich exchange program for the U.S. participants. This capacity may be a branch office of the U.S. applicant organization, a non-governmental partner organization, or other institution with demonstrated experience in educational exchange that can coordinate the program nationally or in the proposed regions. The U.S. organization that receives the cooperative agreement will be responsible for its partner's activities under the cooperative agreement, both programmatically and financially. All applicants need to identify their representation in-country and describe their partners' responsibilities and qualifications.

Participants: All youth and adult participants must be citizens and residents of the country from which they are applying and must be competitively selected. Preference should be given to students who have not previously traveled to the partner country, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program, although engaging adults who have worked with or participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchanges and activities is encouraged in order to nurture linkages with existing programs. Collaboration with American Corners, alumni networks, and English-teaching projects such as Access or Peace Corps is desirable as well. Once the cooperative agreement is awarded, the award recipient must consult with the Embassy staff in the partner country to review their recruitment plans in detail, any specific selection criteria, and the screening and selection process. Recruitment efforts should be designed to attract quality applicants that appropriately represent the diversity of their country. The organization should strive for gender balance in the final delegation.

It is desirable that small groups of participants be from the same town or community so that they can support one another in their projects upon their return home.

The youth participants will:

- be high school students between the ages of 15 and 17 years old at the start of the exchange;
- demonstrate leadership aptitude, an interest in community service, and in the program theme;
- exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness;
- have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants;
- have sufficient proficiency in English to participate fully in all exchange activities; and
- have at least one semester of high school remaining after the exchange program.

The adult participants will:

- be teachers, trainers, or community leaders who work with youth;
- demonstrate an interest in assisting youth to become productive and responsible members of society;
- exhibit maturity and open-mindedness;
- be supportive of the teenage participants;
- have sufficient proficiency in English to participate fully in all exchange activities; and
- remain in teaching positions or other positions of influence on young leaders.

The adult participants must be carefully selected and thoroughly briefed on their roles during the program. Although they are to be full exchange participants, they will also serve as chaperones to some extent. They will have program sessions with the youth and some separate program activities just for them. It is important that they be prepared to allow the students to be vocal, candid, and active participants who do not feel they need to defer to the teacher. At the same time, their shared experience with the students will allow them to serve as adult advocates for the alumni once they have returned home.

Orientations: The award recipient will conduct pre-departure and welcome orientations for the participants to introduce them to the host community and to prepare them for the activities ahead. The orientations should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural

introduction to the United States or to partner countries, plus information related specifically to the objectives and themes of the program, as well as practical and administrative information. The Department of State (PAS or ECA) should be invited to participate in the orientations.

Sites: The delegations should spend their time in no more than three locations in the host country so that the participants have time to familiarize themselves with the communities. Applicants should describe the rationale for their location selections. The Bureau encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the host country.

Exchange Program: The exchange program will offer the participants exposure to the variety of lifestyles in the participating countries. The exchanges should consist primarily of interactive activities, practical experiences, and other opportunities to learn about the fundamentals of civic rights and responsibilities, leadership, respect for diversity, and community activism. Students and adult participants should get a hands-on feel for the topic and learn to re-create similar activities for their peers back home. The Bureau urges applicants to present innovative, resourceful, and effective programming ideas. Applicants should justify their choices by explaining how their program plan will meet the stated goals.

The activities could include a mix of workshops or training sessions, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, volunteer service, leadership training, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Many of these should be planned in conjunction with participation in school and community activities in a way that is mutually educational for the exchange participants and their hosts/peers. Exchange participants should not attend classes in a school for more than a few days without a direct purpose in supporting program goals. All programming should include host country participants wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule. The program will also provide opportunities for the adult educators to work with their peers and other professionals and volunteers to learn about new topics and methods in education and support for youth activism.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:

- Community service/volunteer activities
- Exercises related to increasing tolerance and cooperation and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the program's themes
- Meetings with government, community, and business leaders
- Teambuilding exercises
- Leadership development with workshop trainers or through local organizations that work with youth
- Training that emphasizes research, critical thinking, and analysis
- Computer training and use of the Internet as a resource in education and business
- Visits to historical sites, government and community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about principals of government, history, and society with tourism

- Conferences and training opportunities with youth from the partner country
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical, camping and other extracurricular activities which provide opportunities to participants to work and play together
- Arts and cultural activities

Exchanges will end with a closing session that focuses on summarizing the experience, developing action plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The participants will be encouraged and assisted with developing projects to implement on their return home. The ideas and action plans should spring from the participants, but the program staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the exchange and during the follow-on period.

Accommodations: In the United States, homestays with local families must be arranged for at least half and preferably more of the exchange period. In the partner countries, homestays are strongly encouraged for a significant portion of the exchange period. A significant period will offer the participants sufficient time to become familiar with life in a local home, but may be somewhat abbreviated given the possible language barriers. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program.

The award recipient must have a clear and careful recruitment, screening, and selection process for host families, and must also provide the families with an orientation prior to the arrival of their exchange participants, emphasizing the goals of the program. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. References should also be checked. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in the recruitment and selection of host families. They may represent diversity in family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, and geography. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs.

ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that alumni can effectively pursue the remaining activities of the program, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars, newsletters, and listservs provides critical follow-on and serves to maximize and extend the benefit of the exchange program. Alumni tracking is crucial for program evaluation and follow-on implementation. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State. Please refer to the PSI for additional guidance.

Follow-on Activities for Alumni: The award recipient will design activities for alumni, particularly by facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of their community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the lessons and themes of the exchange. With the assistance of the adult participant alumni, the recipient may offer activities for participants that are located in the same town or region. ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that the alumni can effectively pursue the remaining activities of the program, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through their peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars and newsletters provides critical program follow-on and serves to maximize and extend the benefit of the participants' exchange experiences. Alumni tracking is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional guidance.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the medium-term and long-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the exchanges on the participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with program themes.

Other notes: The recipient organization is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. However, the Bureau requires recipient organizations to communicate with the Public Affairs Sections of the U.S. Embassies on a regular basis about program activities, including recruitment and selection and orientations, exchange activities, publicity events, and follow-on activities. The organization must also inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the program's implementation in a timely fashion. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

### **III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible. The proposal should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements. The proposal should include the following items:

***TAB A - Application for Federal Assistance Cover Sheet (SF-424)***

***TAB B - Executive Summary***

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the program:

1. Name of applicant organization and overseas partner organizations
2. Overview of exchange participants
3. Proposed dates for the exchanges and other significant activities
4. Proposed themes and specific topics
5. Nature of activity and venues
6. Funding level requested from the Bureau, program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources

### ***TAB C - Narrative***

Within 20 double-spaced, single sided pages, provide a detailed description of the program addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

1. Vision: Describe the program objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.
2. Participating Organizations: Identify partner organizations for the program and explain their roles and responsibilities.
3. Recruitment, Screening, and Selection in each country: Present a plan for advertising the program. Outline both the process and the criteria by which finalists will be selected. Identify who is responsible for selection.
4. Program Activities: Describe the components of the exchanges, including program planning, orientations, manifestation of the program themes, educational activities, cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, and the closing session. A detailed outline of the three-week exchanges should be included as an appendix in Tab E. Also, describe support for follow-on activities.
5. Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics: Detail how the applicant will arrange international travel (in compliance with the Fly America Act); domestic travel; properly screened homestays and other housing arrangements; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.
6. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Describe plans for monitoring and ensuring the participants' safety and well-being while participating in the program, including during the homestays. The progress of the cooperative agreement should be monitored closely and ECA and PAS must be kept informed of activities. In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique.
7. Diversity: Explain how the program managers will pro-actively support diversity in participant selection and in program content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity should be defined broadly and should include geographic,



urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and religious diversity.

8. Institutional Capacity and Program Management: Outline the applicant organization's capacity for doing projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: provision of educational and thematic programs, age-appropriate programming for youth, and previous work in the region. Describe the program staffing (individuals and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. Include this information for overseas and other primary partner organizations as well.

9. Work Plan/Schedule: Outline the phases of the program planning and implementation for the entire cooperative agreement period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchanges in an appendix.

#### ***TAB D - Budget Submission***

The maximum level of Bureau funding available for Program A, the Youth Leadership Program with South Asia, is \$300,000. The maximum level of funding for Program B, the Youth Leadership Program with Azerbaijan, is \$1,011,500. These amounts will support one cooperative agreement per program for reciprocal exchanges between the United States and the partner countries. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff travel
- Application and educational materials
- Participant travel (international, domestic, ground transportation, passport and visa fees)
- Orientations
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in homestay
- Stipends for host families to offset costs of hosting (overseas only)
- Food (primarily group meals)
- Interpreter fees and expenses, if necessary, for U.S. exchange participants
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Significant cost sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. Stipends for homestays or for host families in the United States are not allowed as an award-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicants to keep

administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, in-country partners, and other sources.

Maximum limits on cooperative agreement funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs-3% of the cooperative agreement. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts.

Please note that there are no fees for the J-1 visas that foreign participants will use to enter the United States. Applicants should budget for applicants to travel to the U.S. embassy for visa interviews. Exchange participants will be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange; this cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at <http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

Please refer to the PSI for allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

#### ***TAB E***

- *Letters of commitment.* Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations, including the partner organization in the partner countries and any organization receiving a sub-award.
- *Resumes* of all program staff should be included in the submission. No one resume should exceed two pages.
- *Attachments/appendices.* Include draft schedules, application forms, evaluation questionnaires, and/or other materials essential for understanding the proposed program.

#### ***TAB F***

- 1.) SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs."
- 2.) First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.
- 3.) **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their cooperative agreement activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of cooperative agreement activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

4.) Include other attachments, if applicable, i.e. the SF-LLL form, etc.

#### **IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Please refer to Section IV.3F of the RFGP document for specific information regarding the application deadline and methods of submission. For further information on the program or the proposal submission, contact the Youth Programs Division Branch Chief Carolyn Lantz, Telephone: (202) 632-6421; Fax: (202) 632-9355; e-mail address: LantzCS@state.gov.